



NCHS Data on Racial and Ethnic Disparities

About NCHS

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is the Nation's principal health statistics agency, providing data to identify and address health issues. NCHS compiles statistical information to help guide public health and health policy decisions.

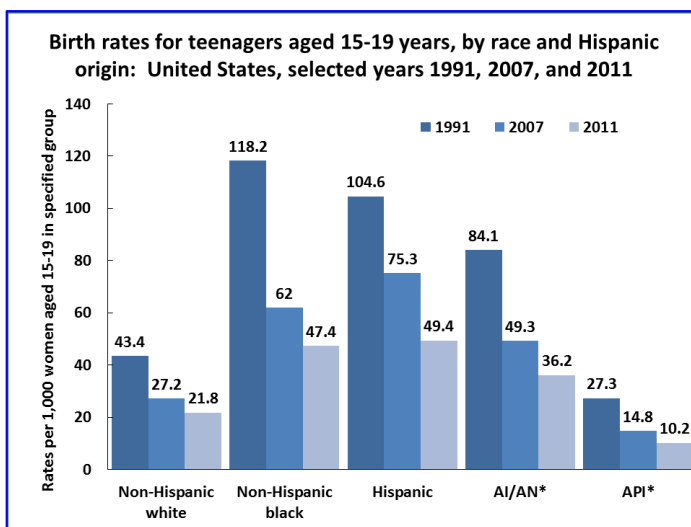
Collaborating with other public and private health partners, NCHS employs a variety of data collection mechanisms to obtain accurate information from multiple sources. This process provides a broad perspective to help us understand the population's health, influences on health, and health outcomes.

Data on Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Improving the health of racial and ethnic minorities in the United States continues to be a public health priority. Despite decades of effort, disparities persist, and changes in the racial and ethnic composition of the population have important consequences for the Nation's health. NCHS has long been a resource for data that document racial and ethnic disparities in health status, health insurance coverage, access to care, and other aspects of health. Virtually every major report and initiative on racial and ethnic health disparities draws heavily from NCHS' data collection systems.

Examples of NCHS Data

The **teenage birth rate** is an important indicator of population change and helps to describe patterns of early family formation. Preliminary 2011 data show that the teenage birth rate fell by one-fourth during 2007-2011, reaching 31.3 births per 1,000 females aged 15-19 in 2011, a record low for the Nation. During the recent 4-year period, rates fell for all population groups, but the greatest decline was for Hispanic teens, by 34 percent. Despite the recent declines, there are large disparities in teenage birth rates. In 2011, teenage birth rates were highest for non-Hispanic black teens (47.4 per 1,000) and Hispanic teens (49.4), followed by American Indian/Alaska Natives (36.2), non-Hispanic whites (21.8) and Asian/Pacific Islanders (10.2).



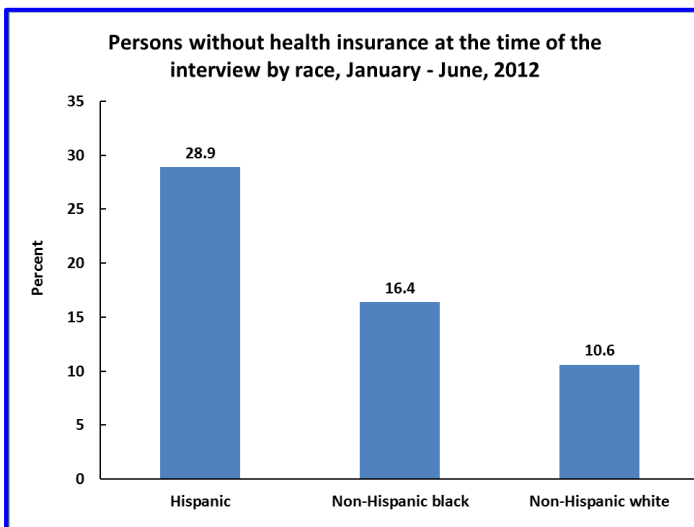
*American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN), Asian or Pacific Islander (API)

Source: National Vital Statistics System, 1991, 2007, 2011.

Health Insurance and Race/Ethnicity

Health insurance coverage is an important determinant of access to health care. Access to health care, which includes having a usual source of care, is important for preventive care and prompt treatment of illness and injury.

NCHS data from January-June 2012 show that Hispanics (28.9 percent) and non-Hispanic blacks (16.4 percent), were more likely to lack health insurance at the time of the interview than non-Hispanic whites (10.6 percent).

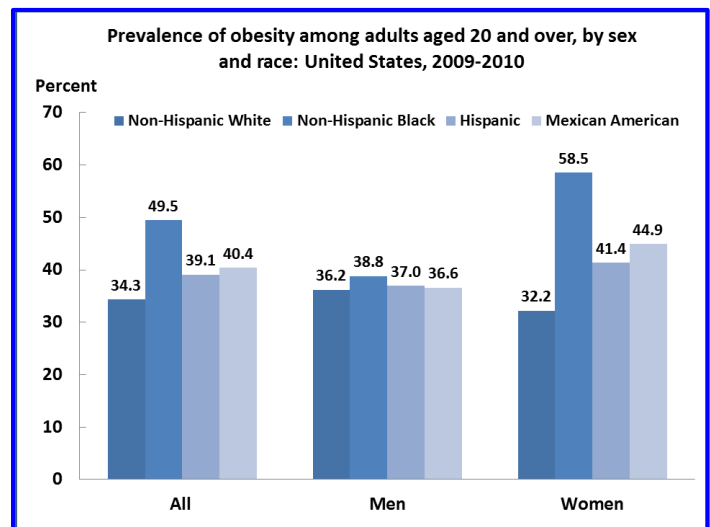


Source: National Health Interview Survey, January – June 2012.

Obesity and Race/Ethnicity

Obesity is associated with increased risk of a number of conditions, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and certain cancers, and with an increased risk of disability.

There were no significant differences in obesity prevalence by race and ethnicity among men. Within race/ethnicity groups, increases over the period 1990-2000 through 2009-2010 were statistically significant for both non-Hispanic black women and Mexican American women.



NOTE: Obesity defined as BMI ≥ 30 kg/m²

Source: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2009-2010.

Sources for Racial and Ethnic Disparity Data

- **National Vital Statistics System** – collects information from birth and death certificates in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, including detailed race/ethnicity characteristics. Because all births and deaths are included in this database, it provides the detail needed for research on disparities. (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss.htm>)
- **National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)** – obtains information on the nation's health status through confidential household interviews that measure: health status and disability, selected conditions, insurance coverage, access to care, use of health services, immunizations, health behaviors, injuries, and the ability to perform daily activities. (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm>)
- **National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)** – collects information about the health and diet of people in the United States. NHANES is unique in that it combines a home interview with physical examinations and laboratory tests conducted in a Mobile Examination Center. NHANES can directly measure conditions and provide reliable information on health conditions regardless of whether the survey respondent is aware of them. (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhanes.htm>)